

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

DEC 8 1988

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name N/A

other names/site number 21CH23

2. Location

street & number

not for publication

city, town

vicinity

state Minnesota

code MN

county Chisago

code 025

zip code 54024

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Benjamin Lery, Acting Federal Preservation Officer

2/15/89  
Date

Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Nina M. Archabal  
Signature of commenting or other official

11/10/88  
Date

Minnesota State Historic Preservation Officer  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
  - See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.

John J. Knud

11/16/89

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/EXTRACTION/PROCESSING

Prehistoric shell processing/extraction

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION--National Park

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls \_\_\_\_\_

roof \_\_\_\_\_

other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Summary

Site 21CH23 is located in Chisago County, Minnesota, and represents a prehistoric single component Woodland archeological site

The site appears to be a mussel extraction station and contains large deposits of shell. A large shell midden approximately 10 to 15 centimeters thick is overlain by 15 to 20 centimeters of soil. The large amount of shell and paucity of cultural material indicates a single component late summer Woodland occupation for the purpose of mussel extraction.

Resource Count

Contributing Resources: There is one contributing resource which is a prehistoric archeological site.

Noncontributing Resources: There are two noncontributing resources which include one structure (a hiking trail) and one site (a late historic camping and target shooting area).

Environmental Description

The present topography of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway was formed when Wisconsin glaciers retreated from the area and fluvial processes sculpted the glacial deposits. The topography of this area is generally level, with some topographic relief along the riverways. Rock outcrops of Precambrian igneous rocks and Cambrian sandstone are scattered throughout the region.

The area has a moist continental climate with warm summers and cold winters. There is moderate precipitation in all seasons, with a summer maximum.

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[REDACTED] is more representative of the Carolinian biotic province (Cushing 1965). The Carolinian province is characterized by a growing season of greater than 120 frost-free days. Such a growing season is suitable for aboriginal agriculture.

Glacial outwash serves as the parent material for the predominantly sandy soils of the region. Vilas, Hiawatha, Omega, Friendship, Nymore, and Meehan are examples of such sandy soils which in lowland areas correlate with the northern mesic forest (National Park Service 1976:62).

A mixed conifer-hardwood forest is found adjacent to the riverway. This forest supports an abundance of wildlife, with the whitetailed deer being the most common large mammal. Other animals present include black bear, coyote, red and gray foxes, mink, muskrat, otter, and beaver. The skins of all these animals have commercial value.

Physical Description

The site, 21CH23, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The vegetation alternates between mixed hardwoods and open, grassy areas used for camping. The site, which consists primarily of a large shell midden measures approximately 10 meters from northeast to southwest and 80 meters from northwest to southeast. The top layer of soil is a humus-rich, black silt loam layer from 10 to 15 centimeters thick. Under this layer is the shell lens from 15 to 25 centimeters thick. In some places this was almost totally shell, and in others this consisted of pockets of shell intermixed with a sandy loam soil. Beneath the shell layer is a brown sandy loam which reaches a depth of at least 70 centimeters below surface. Mussel shell deposits were noted in subsurface contexts and on the nearby riverbank from 15 to 25 centimeters below surface by Commonwealth (1978) and Conner (1983).

Recordation

The site was first located in a 1977 survey by Commonwealth Associates, Inc. (Commonwealth Associates, Incorporated 1978:98). Their collection consisted of mussel shell, burned bone, grit-tempered ceramics, and one quartz flake were. The site was investigated again in 1983 by the Midwest Archeological Center (Connor et al. 1985). Shovel tests were executed in a five meter grid over the site area. This was accomplished using three

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transects with ten shovel tests in each transect. Shell was found in several shovel tests, however, cultural material was limited to a single quartz flake. The positive shovel test represents the location of this flake. Five 1 x 1 m test excavations were made in 10 centimeter levels. Lithic artifacts, faunal remains, and one prehistoric ceramic sherd were recovered through the research efforts of the Midwest Archeological Center.

Prehistoric Component

The total prehistoric assemblage consists of 7 flakes, 19 pieces of non-diagnostic shatter, one chipped stone tool, one grit tempered, cord marked ceramic sherd, and six grams of animal bone. The chipped stone tool was a curvate, quartz flake that had been irregularly retouched along the inside of the curve and at each end. This was a surface find collected from the eroding river bank. The majority of the lithic material was in the four test units from 10-40 centimeters below surface. The grit tempered sherd was recovered from 10-20 cm below the surface of the site.

The grit tempered cord roughened sherd was the only chronologically diagnostic artifact recovered. It was recovered from 10-20 centimeters below surface and suggests a Woodland affinity for the cultural deposits.

The majority of the artifacts were found in the upper two soil horizons. However, some of the cultural material was found in the third soil horizon (Connor et al. 1985:91).

Only a small quantity of faunal material was recovered and the only vertebrate faunal remains were recovered from Excavation Unit 4 from 30-40 centimeters below the surface. These have tentatively been identified as pocket gopher (probably intrusive) and deer. Shell was collected, but not identified due to lack of adequate reference material on hand.

Historic Component

Recently deposited historical material has also been recovered from the site. Artifacts include ceramic vessel fragments, clay pigeon targets, bottle glass, metal closures, and ammunition. All material was found not deeper than 10 cm beneath the surface except one piece of brown bottle glass (probably from a beer bottle) in the second 10 centimeters. Most of the material has a post-1900 date of manufacture, and several artifacts were produced only in the last twenty years. The

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material appears to have accumulated recently as the result of target shooting and camping activities.

Area Excavated

Test pit excavation and shovel testing resulted in a total area of 14 square meters being excavated out of 800 meters of site area. This amounts to approximately 2% of the total area of the site.

Disturbances

The primary source of disturbance to the prehistoric component of the site is 

Data Limitations

Absolute dates have not yet been obtained from this site. The Woodland component is identified on the basis of a single diagnostic sherd. A series of absolute dates would help determine the length of prehistoric occupation at the site.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)  
Archeology--prehistoric  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance  
Woodland Period  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates  
A.D.600 to  
A.D.1400  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation  
Woodland (Late)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person  
N/A

Architect/Builder  
N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Summary Statement

Site 21CH23 is a significant prehistoric archeological site which contains buried and undisturbed archeological material. A substantial shell lens is present at the site. A single cord marked ceramic sherd and lithic debris are associated with this midden suggesting a Woodland mussel extraction camp. The site is significant for its potential to yield information about prehistoric subsistence and settlement patterns, and prehistoric chronology.

Cultural Context

The Woodland component was identified on the basis of a diagnostic pot sherd recovered from 10 to 20 centimeters below surface and the presence of the large shell midden. Woodland mussel extraction sites similar to 21CH23 have been previously identified in southwestern Wisconsin. These sites also contained little or no artifactual material. "Off site processing areas were positioned adjacent to highly productive mussel beds, where meats were removed and shells discarded." (Conner 1983:95) The site represents at least one of the major cultural periods that have occurred in the St. Croix National Riverway.

Research Topics and Related Data Categories

Cultural resources can be evaluated for several types of significance under Criterion D of the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. The cultural resources of 21CH23 can be evaluated for prehistoric archeological significance.

See continuation sheet

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1. Prehistoric subsistence patterns. This site has potential for providing data useful in analyzing prehistoric subsistence patterns. A shell midden is present which has potential for yielding information on what species of mussel were collected. Previous work on shell middens (Theler 1983) has shown that there was a preference for certain species, and that these species are sometimes no longer present in the same habitat due to changes in the river system. A small quantity of bone was also recovered from a buried context. Species identified from the bone material included deer and pocket gopher. Deer is the most common larger vertebrate recovered at Woodland period sites. The pocket gopher was probably intrusive.

2. Settlement patterns. The site, primarily a large buried shell midden, has the potential to yield data valuable in understanding prehistoric settlement patterns. The site during prehistoric times appears to have been used intermittently for short term, limited activities. This is indicated by the small amount of cultural and faunal material and large quantities of shell. The abundance of mussel shell and the presence of deer bones suggest that the main function of the site was for food extraction from the resources of the local area. An abundance of mussel shell associated with limited cultural debris has been attributed to stations used during the late summer to process and dry large quantities of mussel meat as a winter food resource in the Driftless Area of Wisconsin (Theler 1983). This kind of activity probably was occurring at 21CH23. While flooding could be a factor in the deposition of the shell at the site, the recovery of lithics, ceramic sherd, and deer faunal remains in association with the midden suggest its affiliation with the Woodland period. Historic cultural material appears to be of recent origin within the first 10 centimeters and probably a result of camping activities.

3. Dating potential. The site contains shell and bone in its buried cultural deposits. These materials can be dated by the radiocarbon dating technique. Dating of the site will yield significant information on when intensive utilization of mussel beds was practiced in the region. Since accurate dating presents a real problem in the area, dating this relatively short term site could be most beneficial in refining cultural chronology.

4. Shell midden site type. Most of the information from this site has come from its location and existence, rather than its artifactual content. If the site is a non-residential extraction site, artifactual material or features will not be abundant.

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Shell midden sites are not well understood in the St. Croix region. The location of the site on a levee on the floodplain adds to the unusual character of the site. This 75-meter shell lens, with its dateable contents, provides excellent research potential for a clearer understanding of the Woodland cultural period and the subsistence base upon which they depended. The type of mussel species exploited, when this is determined, has the potential to add to the existing knowledge of the riverways. A preference for certain species of mussel could be important, as some species are no longer existent because of changes in the river system.

5. Site integrity. Research potential is enhanced by the relatively undisturbed condition of the prehistoric component. Although dirt bike traffic has disturbed cultural material in certain areas, most of the site is intact. The undisturbed nature of the site contributes to the sites potential to yield additional diagnostic artifacts. The site measures 80 meters from northwest to southeast and 10 meters from northeast to southwest.

Additional Significance

While there are few diagnostic artifacts, this does not reduce the significance of the site. Only fourteen square meters or 2% of the site has been excavated, so the site has the potential to yield additional diagnostic artifacts. Radiocarbon can also be used to corroborate the time frame.

The determination of significance is a dynamic process subject to changes in the resource base and shifts in research interests (Lynott 1980). The finite nature of the archeological data base and the irreversible nature of its destruction are important factors when considering site significance. With uncontrolled development in the private sector the archeological data base is rapidly diminishing. Therefore, it is argued that the National Park System offers an excellent opportunity to preserve a wide range of cultural resources that will not be preserved elsewhere (Lynott 1982). As sites continue to be destroyed across the nation, and as archeological research interests and techniques evolve, National Park areas may become islands where the archeological record remains intact (Richner 1983). It is within these considerations that the significance of the archeological site, 21CH23, should be evaluated.





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## Commonwealth Associates, Inc.

- 1978 An Archeological Survey of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. Phase II. Commonwealth Associates Report #1897, Jackson, MI.

## Connor, M. A., C. M. Schoen, J. E. Zalesky, and J. R. Bozell

- 1985 Archeological Investigations Along the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, 1983. Manuscript on file. Midwest Archeological Center, Lincoln, Nebraska.

## Cushing, E. J.

- 1965 Problems in the Quaternary Phytogeography of the Great Lakes Region. In The Quaternary of the United States, H. E. Wright Jr. and D. G. Frey (eds.), pp. 403-416. Princeton University Press, Princeton.

## Lynott, M. J.

- 1980 The Dynamics of Significance: An Example from Central Texas. American Antiquity 45:117-120.

- 1982 An Evaluation of Three Archaeological Sites in the Ozark National Scenic Riverways. Manuscript on file, Midwest Archeological Center, Lincoln.

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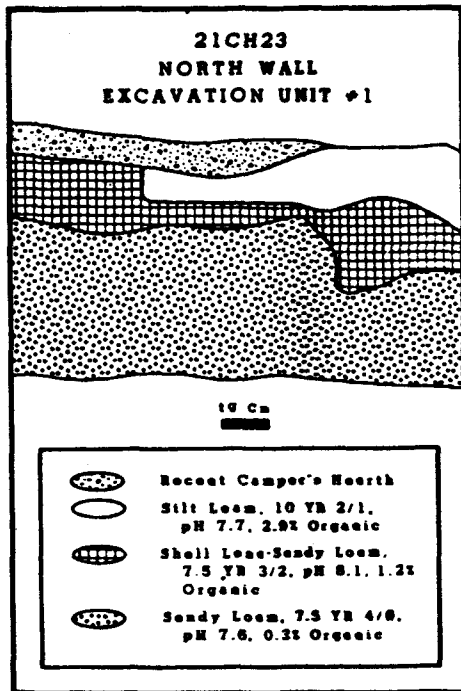
- 1976 St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, Master Plan. Manuscript on file, Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service, Omaha, Nebraska.

## Richner, J. J.

- 1983 Archeological Investigations at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, 1979-1980. Draft Manuscript on file, Midwest Archeological Center, Lincoln.

## Theler, J. L.

- 1983 Woodland Tradition Economic Strategies: Animal Resource Utilization in Southwestern Wisconsin and Northeastern Iowa. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison.



**Figure 14. 21CH23.  
Excavation unit 1,  
north wall profile.**

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 8803129

Date Listed: 1/16/89

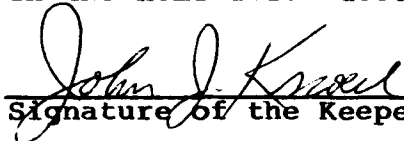
Archeological Site No. 21CH23  
Property Name

Chisago  
County

Minnesota  
State

Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
Signature of the Keeper

1/16/89  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

Item 3. Classification.

There is 1 contributing site; there are no contributing buildings.

Item 6. Current function.

The Current Function is RECREATION/park.

Item 8. Level of Significance.

The level of significance is local.

Item 8. Period of Significance.

The period of significance is A.D. 600-1499. There are no significant dates.

Verified by phone with:

Cathie Masters

Midwest Archeological Center/National Park Service

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DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)